

1777
11660.c.5.
17139
500
A N

E L E G Y
K

WRITTEN AT A

CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY

IN THE

AUSTRIAN NETHERLANDS.

"Paulum sepultæ distat inertiae

"Celata Virtus."

HOR. Ode ix. Lib. IV.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR M. FOLINGSBY, BOOKSELLER, NEAR
TEMPLE-BAR; AND JAMES PARKER, STATIONER,
CHANCERY-LANE.

MDCCLXXVII.

1214

Y O E L E



AUSTRIAN MUSEUM

LIBRARY

THE MUSEUM

1864

PRINTED BY THE MUSEUM

[A N

E L E G Y.

THE pensive Train of Contemplation sweet,
 Rise with the beamy Fires of Vesper's Star;
 The dying Gales in softer Whispers greet
 The shadowy Night, thron'd in her silver Car.

The Scheld in gleamy Radiance glides along,
 Laving the lonely Chartreux' aged bow'rs;
 From pealing organs swells the solemn Song,
 And choral Hymns lead on the midnight Hours.

Save when these Rites the watchful Heart declare,
 A dread Repose broods o'er the hallow'd Ground;
 Or when sad Pilgrims to the Shrines repair,
 Where many a fainted Relick hangs around.

The dusky Pile in Vandal Ages rear'd,
 Sacred to Solitude, to Pray'r, and Praise,
 The Poet's Lay perhaps hath never heard,
 Since the first Father's long-forgotten Days.

Encircling Ivy chains the mould'ring Tow'r;
 Funereal Yews throw round a death-like Gloom;
 Her Cloisters Melancholy wanders o'er,
 And Grief fits languid on the sculptur'd Tomb.

Can Error reign in these calm Seats of Peace?
 Here, doth not Wisdom make her blest Abode?
 Doth not the Voice of restless Passion cease?
 Here, the rapt Soul hold Converse with her God?



When

When the rais'd Spirit, dead to all below,
 Burns with seraphic Ardour unconfin'd,
 Can earth-born Scenes teach human Breaſt to glow
 With ſuch pure Flames, and leave their Droſs behind?

So, when the Tempeſt low'rs in Ev'ning Skies,
 Some wilder'd Trav'ler views a lambent Flame;
 But led by treach'rous Rays where Danger lies,
 He dies unpity'd, and unknown to Fame.

The Storm-toſt Mariner to Ports of Reſt
 Anxious, o'er Rocks and wild Waves, works his Way;
 But Wiſdom places in the heedleſs Breaſt,
 What the falſe World nor gives, nor takes away.

To theſe dank Walls, in ſearch of true Repoſe,
 Thus erring Zeal and harraſs'd Minds have flown;
 But found no bleſt Afylum from the Woes
 That cleave to Life, and haunt the Boſom's Throne.

Though Fancy decorate this awful scene,
 Awhile the flumb'ring Passions Peace controul;
 Yet oft Repentance wastes the placid Mien,
 And silent Anguish preys upon the Soul.

Though down the founding Isles the Vot'ries muse
 On the World's Vanities and empty Joys;
 Life's fleeting Hours the Visionaries lose,
 Which active Virtue usefully employs.

Nature's Affections on the Heart recoil
 Unchanging, while the purple Currents flow;
 Humanity was born to varying Toil,
 Alternate Hours of Strife and Rest to know :

That Life to fullen Solitude consign'd,
 For social gen'rous Purposes was giv'n:
 No rigid Rules was Penitence enjoin'd,
 "To purify her contrite Heart for Heav'n."

Not countless Orisons at glittering Shrines,
 Not Melodies before the fainted Stone,
 Feed pure Religion's Flame, that faintly shines,
 Confin'd to solitary Cells alone.

In these Retreats, where pale-ey'd Spleen retires,
 Sloth's drowsish Sons, and superstitious Zeal,
 Perhaps some Bards quench'd all the Muses Fires,
 And bade the radiant Paths of Fame farewell.

O Gefner*! hadst thou scorn'd the heav'nly Muse
 That led thy Steps to Virtue and Renown,
 Reviv'd all Eden to thy ravish'd Views,
 And made the Palm of moral Song thine own:

Hadst thou to some lone Chartreux' Cell retir'd,
 Where Youth and Genius wither in their Prime;
 Thy living Lays no future Age had fir'd,
 Thy Name had slept beneath oblivious Time.

Here,

* Gefner, Author of the Death of Abel, and other Performances in the German language.

Here, what avails each pensive Sage's Lore?

The thorny Paths Truth's holy Martyrs trod?

All in their Sphere uniting to explore

The Ways that lead to Happiness and God.

Or, could those Heroes start from Death's cold Shade,

War's horrid Bolts in youthful Vigour flew:

Such, Fontenoy*! thy fatal Fields display'd;

And brought all Thracymene to Britain's View:

Would not Reproach dart from the Soldier's Eye?

Would not his bold impartial Tongue declare,

" Fair Fame forbids the virtuous Man to die †,

" And all the Brave are Heav'n's peculiar Care?

" Whether triumphal Wreaths adorn their Brow,

" Or Fate the Warriors from the Toils release,

" When o'er their Graves the weeping Muses strew

" Spring's fairest Flow'rs, and sing their Shade to Peace."

No

* The Field of Fontenoy is at a little Distance from the Monastery.

† " Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori." Horat.

No longer Carnage gluts her crimfon'd Steel;

Yet, while a British Mufe ftill lingers here,

Can fhe forbear her Heroes Wounds to feel?

To pay the facred Tribute of a Tear?

To deck, with grateful Awe, their hallow'd Mould?

With gentle Collins breathe the mournful Lay?

“ Attend the Spring with dewy Fingers cold,

“ And blefs the Turf that wraps their honour'd Clay?”

But ye, who wafte in mute lethargic Eafe

Revolving Years, from hardy Manhood's Prime;

Will Glory fculpture in her Fane like thefe,

And fnatch your Mem'ries from the Stream of Time?

Here, faint and cold, the drooping Virtues beam,

With Luftre fruitless, cheerless, and unknown;

Like fad fepulchral Lamps, that bluely gleam

Through dreary Vaults, and light the Dead alone.

Unheard the Pæans of the tuneful Train,
 That welcome Truth and Mercy from the Skies*,
 To grace Imperial Joseph's halcyon Reign,
 Around whose Throne reviving Honours rise.

O Prince belov'd! some future Bard may pour,
 In loftier Lays, the Tide of Verse along;
 Spread Emulation's Flame from Shore to Shore,
 And Patriot Princes kindle with her Song.

So tow'ring Pindar's Theban Swans aspire†,
 Bear to the Clouds his fam'd Sicilian's ‡ Praise;
 Like him the Muse's Sons should wake the Lyre,
 To Virtue sacred, and unspotted Bays,

But

* Written soon after the Emperor's Proclamation appeared, permitting every Subject to have Access to his Presence, to represent their Grievances and Complaints.

† "Multa Diræum levat Aura Cynum." Hor. L. IV. Od. ii.

‡ Hiero.

But not to Thrones or princely Domes confin'd;
 * Along sequester'd Vales they love to stray,
 Where modest Worth, the Grace of Human-kind,
 Blooms in the Shade, and shuns the Glare of Day.

Oft at the silent Eve, or Saffron Dawn,
 There, rapt'rous Visions bless the Poet's Eyes,
 Ideal Forms glide o'er the pearly Lawn,
 Or Structures fair with moral Meaning rise:

Mild beams the Ray from Truth's all-piercing Eye,
 Lucid and full her snowy Mantle flows,
 Touch'd by her Wand the murky Shadows fly,
 And all the Landscape at her Presence glows.

Around their Queen, the Sister Arts attend;
 The Pow'rs of Painting, Melody, and Song;
 And Liberty, the Muse and Virtue's Friend,
 To Honour's Temple leads her Train along;

B 2

Unmov'd

* "Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus, et fugit urbes." Hor. L. II. Epist. ii.

Unmov'd at Tyranny's malignant Frown,
 Gleaming in Mail, and grasping clanking Chains;
 Red Persecution, with her triple Crown,
 Or Vice, with Satyrs, rev'ling o'er the Plains.

But not one Spark of this celestial Fire,
 Here warms the Heart, unlocks the silent Tongue,
 Or arms with Pow'rs that Freedom could inspire,
 When Zeuxis painted, or Alcæus sung.

The Lyre, with Rage divine, then fill'd the Breast,
 With glowing Zeal, to bigot Hearts unknown;
 And Genius, with her boldest Strokes, imprest
 The vivid Canvass and the breathing Stone.

But here, how fall'n! how droops the free-born Soul!
 Crouching beneath a Pontiff's sacred Frown:
 Behold, alas! the mystic Beads and Cowl,
 Succeed the Patriot's Steel and Laurel Crown.

Would

Would such with Rapture on the Canvass dwell?
 Would kindred Ardours sparkle in their Eye?
 Would Life's warm Pulses emulative swell,
 Like those to conquer, or like those to die?

When Freedom mourns her sacred Fires oppress'd,
 How bright Demosthenes and Tully shine!
 But here, dull Legends loath a torpid Rest,
 And all neglected sleeps their Page divine.

So lift the frozen Alps their hoary Brow,
 Cold and unmov'd before the Solar Ray,
 Though roseate Spring smiles in the Vales below,
 Pours her gay Notes, and greets the genial Day.

But let not Candour close the Lay severe,
 Nor frown indignant on a cloister'd Life:
 Haply some antient Virtues linger here,
 That fled from venal Crouds and noisy Strife.

Here the Heart, dead to Folly's tinsel Joys,
 Cleaves to the hallow'd Cross and spiny Crown:
 Those Hours which Vice in Orgies still employs,
 Are wing'd with Praises to their Maker's Throne.

Their Gates, unfolding at the Trav'ler's Voice,
 Declare some hospitable Genius here,
 That bids the weary'd Pilgrim's Heart rejoice,
 Pours Pity's Balm, and shares in Mis'ry's Tear.

So may the Tiding of eternal Peace,
 In brighter Worlds, these pious Cares repay!
 There, human Woes with human Frailties cease,
 And Truth no longer mourns her clouded Ray.



